

VIETNAMESE AFFAIRS STAFF

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

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DATE: 15 Oct 73

TO: THE DIRECTOR

FROM:

SUBJECT:

REMARKS:

STAT Sometime ago (I think in early September), you sent down a monograph which you had received from Lyman Kirkpatrick. You asked me to have someone take a look at it, comment on it, and prepare an appropriate reply for your signature. I passed it to [redacted] and others who had been concentrating on Vietnam psychological warfare matters (the subject of the monograph). Attached is the original text plus a proposed note from you to Kirkpatrick which incorporates our comments. I regret that this chore got slightly lost in the shuffle of recent events, but believe the delay is not yet too embarrassing.

STAT [redacted]
George A. Carver, Jr.

Deputy for National Intelligence Officers

Attachments

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

Professor Lyman B. Kirkpatrick, Jr.
Brown University
Box 1844
Providence, Rhode Island

Dear Kirk:

I asked some of my associates who concentrate on Vietnamese problems to take a look at the monograph on "U.S. Psychological Operations in Vietnam" which you kindly sent me. You might be interested in their reactions.

First, they felt the title was slightly misleading. Mr. Latimer's monograph does not really address the totality of the U.S. Government's psychological warfare activities and operations in Vietnam. Instead, it concentrates largely on USIA/JUSPAO activities in South Vietnam which were predominantly directed at the South Vietnamese population (chiefly the rural population). This was an area, incidentally, in which the Agency's role was minimal.

With the above caveat understood, my associates felt Mr. Latimer had done a thorough, balanced and useful analysis of those portions of the total effort he did discuss. He raises and sheds light on some interesting philosophical problems and generally handles a complicated, controversial subject in a very even-handed way.

My colleagues did have a few nits to pick. On page 31 of his text, Mr. Latimer asserts that

"the [JUSPAO] province officer had access to money, a 'black bag' from which he could purchase what was needed ... the money was that of C.I.A. and required only minimum accounting or reporting."

This is either a garble or excessive poetic license. There was no such "black bagging" of JUSPAO activities with Agency funds, nor was any such fiscal freewheeling possible (on any appreciable scale) under our very strict internal accounting procedures -- procedures which you yourself had a large hand in establishing.

On page 44, Mr. Latimer takes a swipe at the Phoenix program which my associates -- and I -- feel is a trifle too sweeping. No one is better aware than I of the shortcomings and faults of some of the activities carried out under the rubric of "Phoenix"; but I think my colleagues are justified in questioning the universal accuracy of the judgment that Phoenix was a prime example of a program "patently unworkable, wrong in concept and counterproductive." They also question, as do I, the universal accuracy of Miss FitzGerald's comments quoted on pages 44 and 45. We have no reason to doubt Mr. Latimer's assertion that "most of the officers interviewed in preparation of this paper" would agree with Miss FitzGerald's judgments, but we suspect that the bulk of the officers interviewed had served with JUSPAO, and JUSPAO representatives in the field had a fairly limited direct association with Phoenix.

Despite our few nits such as those just mentioned, my knowledgeable colleagues consider Mr. Latimer's monograph very well done. Its contention that Americans should have been less eager to do for the Vietnamese what the latter could really only do for themselves is something that many of us consider one of the real lessons that the Vietnam experience should have taught us.

Thank you again for letting us have a look at the monograph. Mr. Latimer deserves to be commended for producing a very solid piece of work.

Sincerely yours,

W. E. Colby
Director